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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 48th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TEIRLINCK (Belgium)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued)

Reformulation of activities under sections 9 and 10 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/228 A

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/49/L.64

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 107: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995 (continued)

Reformulation of activities under sections 9 and 10 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/228 A (A/C.5/49/30)

1. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/49/30, said that it contained specific recommendations by the General Assembly regarding the reformulation of activities under section 9 (Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis) and section 10 (Department for Development Support and Management Services) of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, in order to bring the language of the relevant paragraphs into conformity with that of the medium-term plan and pertinent resolutions.

2. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should recommend that the General Assembly take note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Reformulation of activities under sections 9 and 10 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/228 A" (A/C.5/49/30).

3. It was so decided.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/49/L.64 (A/C.5/49/61)

4. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), introducing the statement submitted by the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/49/L.64 concerning the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) (A/C.5/49/61), said that the draft resolution would authorize the renewal of the mandate of the Mission for a further period of six months from 1 April to 30 September 1995. As indicated in the report, the General Assembly had appropriated $10,069,600 for the Mission for the period from 1 October 1994 to 31 March 1995, of which an estimated $8,154,100 had been spent. Additional funds required for the period from 1 April 1995 to 30 September 1995 were estimated at $12,054,300, including expenses for air transportation to enable Mission personnel to reach remote areas. As a result of under-spending during the previous six-month period, however, the actual appropriation required under section 4 (Peace-keeping operations and special missions) of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 was $10,138,800. Should the General Assembly at its fiftieth session decide to extend the Mission's mandate beyond 30 September 1995, the Secretary-General should be authorized to enter into commitments through the end of December 1995 in an amount not exceeding $5,600,000.

5. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the Advisory Committee had considered the Secretary-General's statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/49/61) in which he estimated the requirements for the extension of MINUGUA at $12,054,300

for the period from 1 April to 30 September 1995. The additional requirements for the continuation of the activities of MINUGUA were estimated at $10,138,800, taking into account the $1,915,500 remaining available from the $10,069,600 which the General Assembly, in its resolution 49/220, had appropriated for the period from 1 October 1994 to 31 March 1995 under section 4 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

6. As indicated in paragraph 1 of the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the first report of the Director of MINUGUA (A/49/856), the Mission had been established by General Assembly resolution 48/267 for an initial period of six months, with the mandate to verify implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights (A/48/928-S/1994/448, annex I) signed by the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) at Mexico City on 29 March 1994. The Advisory Committee noted that, as indicated in paragraph 6 of the annex to document A/49/856, on the basis of the agreement reached between the United Nations and the Government of Guatemala, the Mission had formally initiated its activities on 21 November 1994. Upon request, the Advisory Committee had been informed that the status-of-mission agreement with the Government of Guatemala, requested in resolution 48/267, paragraph 7, had been approved by the Guatemala Congress in December 1994 and passed into law in January 1995. The agreement determined the Mission's legal status and defined the privileges and immunities of its members and property (A/49/856, para. 6).

7. As indicated in paragraph 3 of document A/49/860, since 28 February 1995 the Mission had been fully deployed with its headquarters in Guatemala City, eight regional offices and five sub-offices. The Advisory Committee noted that the staffing requirements of the Mission would continue at the same number and level of posts authorized by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, namely, 10 military observers, 60 civilian police, 113 international staff (51 at the Professional level and above, 35 General Service and 27 Field Service personnel), 72 United Nations Volunteers and 135 local staff. As indicated in paragraph 3 of document A/C.5/49/61 and annex I thereto, the estimates for international and local staff costs, including travel and mission subsistence allowance, consultants and related costs amounted to $9,856,000, while estimates for operational costs, such as rental and maintenance of premises and vehicles and purchase of furniture, vehicles and equipment amounted to $2,198,300.

8. The Advisory Committee had been informed that, as of 24 March 1995, the actual personnel deployed in the Mission area included 10 military observers, 30 civilian police, 106 international staff, 72 United Nations Volunteers and 93 local staff.

9. As indicated in annex III to document A/C.5/49/61, total estimated expenditure for the period from 1 October 1994 to 31 March 1995 was $8,154,100. Of that amount, the Advisory Committee had been informed that $4,297,493 represented unliquidated obligations and forecasts of commitments. Based on past experience, from 10 to 15 per cent of those obligations would not actually be required for disbursement. Accordingly, the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of 12 per cent or $515,700.

10. The Advisory Committee noted that the provisions for international and local staff included an estimate of $99,600 for official travel costs. That estimate represented an increase of $36,900 or 58.9 per cent over the amount previously approved for official travel for the period from 1 October 1994 to 31 March 1995. During that period, the Advisory Committee had been informed that, including unliquidated travel obligations, the amount spent for travel was $52,900. The Advisory Committee was of the view that, based on the travel requirements of MINUGUA as explained to the Committee, an amount of $79,600 should be adequate for that purpose during the period from 1 April to 30 September 1995.

11. With regard to the provisions for freight and other related costs ($261,200), as shown in paragraph B.6 of annex I, the Advisory Committee had been informed that $81,200 of that amount would be required to cover the freight costs for the transfer of 22 vehicles from the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi. Those vehicles were previously funded under the budgetary provisions for the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM). The Advisory Committee intended to examine comprehensively the costs and benefits of transferring assets from Brindisi to the various United Nations peace-keeping operations during its review of the Secretary-General's report on that subject to be submitted to the General Assembly, pursuant to resolution 49/233 VII, paragraph 2, by which the Secretary-General had been requested to report, "no later than 31 March 1995, on the feasibility of procedures for valuation and transfer of costs for assets to be redeployed from a peace-keeping operation during its liquidation phase to other peace-keeping operations or other United Nations bodies, and for reimbursement to the special account of the liquidating operation". Other freight requirements of $180,000 had not been adequately explained to the Advisory Committee and in the Advisory Committee's opinion were not required for the current period.

12. In the circumstances, taking into account the foregoing observations, the Advisory Committee recommended that, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/49/L.64, an additional appropriation of $9,423,100 would be required under section 4 (Peace-keeping operations and special missions) of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 for activities during the period from 1 April to 30 September 1995. An additional appropriation of $769,000 would be required under section 28 (Staff assessment), offset by the same amount under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment).

13. Furthermore, with regard to the Secretary-General's request in paragraph 12 of document A/C.5/49/61, the Advisory Committee recommended that, should the General Assembly decide, at its fiftieth session, to extend the mandate of MINUGUA beyond 30 September 1995, the Secretary-General should be authorized to enter into commitments through the end of December 1995 in an amount not to exceed $4,711,550, or approximately one half of the estimated amount to be appropriated for the period from 1 April to 30 September 1995.

14. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Fifth Committee should decide, without a vote, to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/49/L.64, an additional appropriation of $9,423,100 would be required under section 4 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 for activities in the period 1 April to 30 September 1995, it being understood that the activities

relating to MINUGUA were of an extraordinary nature and should continue to be dealt with outside the procedures related to the contingency fund, as provided for in paragraph 11 of annex I to General Assembly resolution 41/213. An additional appropriation of $769,000 would also be required under section 28 (Staff assessment), offset by the same amount under income section 1 (Income from staff assessment). Furthermore, should the General Assembly decide, at its fiftieth session to extend the mandate of MINUGUA beyond 30 September 1995, the Secretary-General should be authorized to enter into commitments in an amount not to exceed $4,711,550, under section 4 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, for activities during the period 1 October to 31 December 1995.

15. The draft decision was adopted.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.